

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 SSO-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 CCO-00 NSAE-00 USSS-00 PRS-01 L-02

PM-03 ACDA-10 SAJ-01 INR-10 INRE-00 EURE-00 DRC-01

RSC-01 /070 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2945

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 12635

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, UR, US

SUBJ: MIDDLE EAST: SOVIET NEWSMAN SUGGESTS ARMS LIMITATION
AGREEMENT

1. SUMMARY: NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENTS HEDRICK SMITH CALLED AFTERNOON OCTOBER 12 TO REPORT THAT NOVOSTI CORRESPONDENT HAD SUGGESTED DURING LUNCHEON OCTOBER 10 THAT US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON LIMITING ARMS SHIPMENTS MIGHT NOW BE GOOD WAY TO CONTAIN CONFLICT IN MIDDLE EAST.
END SUMMARY.

2. AT LUNCHEON, WHICH WAS ARRANGED PRIOR TO OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES IN MIDDLE EAST, NOVOSTI CORRESPONDENT TED RUKHADZE (PROJECT) ASKED SMITH WHETHER IT WOULD NOT AT THIS POINT BE A GOOD IDEA IF US AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS AGREED TO LIMIT ARMS SHIPMENTS TO MIDDLE EAST AS A MEANS OF CONTAINING THE CONFLICT IN THAT AREA. SMITH REPLIED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT USG HAD LONG SOUGHT SUCH AN AGREEMENT BUT TO NO AVAIL.

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THIS IDEA WAS BEING WIDELY DISCUSSED IN
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OFFICIAL OR JOURNALISTIC CIRCLES, RUKHADZE REPLIED THAT

IT WAS HIS OWN IDEA. (RUKHADZE DID NOT SUGGEST THAT HIS COMMENTS BE PASSED TO EMBASSY OR ANYBODY ELSE.)

4. SMITH SAID HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT IDEA WAS GOOD ONE BUT THAT IT WOULD BE IMPORTANT THAT ANY SUCH AGREEMENT CONTINUE AFTER A CEASEFIRE WERE ACHIEVED. RUKHADZE AGREED.

5. SMITH ASKED HOW OTHER STATES WOULD BE AFFECTED BY SUCH AN ARRANGMENT. RUKHADZE REPLIED THAT HE ASSUMED THAT OTHER COMBATANTS (I.E., THOSE WHO HAD DECLARED WAR AGAINST ISRAEL) WOULD BE FREE TO ASSIST ALLIES. BUT NON-COMBATANTS WOULD BE CALLED UPON TO REFRAIN FROM SUPPLYING ARMS TO PARTIES AT WAR.

6. SMITH REPORTS THAT THIS WAS ONLY SUBSTANTIVE ITME DISCUSSED DURING LUNCHEON AND THAT DISCUSSION OF MIDDLE EAST WAS INITIATED BY RUKHADZE. RUKHADZE USED TO WORK IN NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION OF NOVOSIT AND WAS RECENTLY TRANSFERRED TO CENTRAL POLITICAL SECTION. SMITH INFORMS ME THAT ASSOCIATE OF RUKHADZE'S GAVE SMITH HINT THAT SUMMIT MEETING OF 1972 WOULD TAKE PLACE DESPITE MINING OF HAIPHONG HARBOR.

7. COMMENT: WE HAVE HAD NO SUGGESTION FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE, OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL, THAT ARMS LIMITATION AGREEMENT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION HERE. NEVERTHELESS, ON THE OUTSIDE CHANCE THAT THIS IS A TRIAL BALLOON, IT IS OBVIOUSLY WORTH PURSUING IF NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED RECENTLY WITH SOVIET IN WASHINGTON CONVERSATION, ABOUT WHICH UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE COMPLETELY IN THE DARK.
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